

MEMO FROM  
J. LEDERBERG  
GENETICS DEPARTMENT  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

TO: Mrs. Fred Harris

TX  
RC  
RO

Saturday, May 11, 1968

I neglected to send this enclosure with  
my letter of August 22/

*Sincerely  
J. Lederberg*

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J. LEDERBERG  
GENETICS DEPARTMENT  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

TO:

RC  
RO

I hope I have been able to get across a  
rather confused message:

- 1) We do need to talk about "institutional racism" to convey some reality about the problems ahead of us;
- 2) Then to say "abolish racism" is to say nothing that is useful and concrete. We need to analyze the problem, so that we can "abolish" the fragmentary but pervasive injustices that we can concretely identify and obtain the means to deal with.

Without that analysis, "abolish racism"  
means nothing other than "make life perfect"

*See Urban Coalition  
File*

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THE PRIMER restates what we all know, that we live in a system of institutions that rigidify and perpetuate historic wrongs while keeping the coloration of individual tolerance. What consolation is it to the Negro that only a minority of whites cast aspersions on his children while the rest point to their own intellectual progress in racial understanding; while the Negro is still systematically excluded from good housing, good education, goods jobs; while the riots are exploited as excuses to turn our back on human needs?

We are cautioned not to "reward" rioters with reforms in response to violence. What could possibly be more racist than to incriminate 20 million people for the crimes of a few tens of thousands and to deny them what is justice, not charity. Or do we believe that one race does have the right to that domination of another which is the fact of American life today?

The responsibility for institutional racism is too heavy for any one individual to bear. There are no easy ways to change it. But the first step is honest awareness. As long as we tolerate white dominion, let us admit that we are white racists whatever the color of our skin, the profession of our tolerance or the Genuetli-  
chkeit of our commiseration.  
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(MRS.) FRED HARRIS